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ABSTRACT

In an effort to bridge the gap between theory and practice, the Education Department of the College of Steubenville initiated the Early Experience Program to operate in conjunction with the required course of study for all full-time elementary education majors. The program places freshman through senior students in the classrooms of schools (parochial and public) in the surrounding area in order to give the student personal contact with methods and techniques, small-group instruction, and classroom structure. It also affords him insight into the development of a philosophy of education, and most importantly, permits direct involvement with children. Aims of the program are to help the student decide for himself whether his chosen profession is right for him and to allow the Education Department to work individually with students to strengthen their skills and provide an extensive background for their work as future teachers. (Author/JA)

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ED 086619

EARLY EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

THE COLLEGE OF STEUBENVILLE

STEUBENVILLE, OHIO

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STATEMENT

Concerned with the upward trend of performance tasks and accountability of teachers, the Education Department of the College of Steubenville implemented a program to supplement the course of study followed by an education major, which would give background in the areas of practicality, personal contact and actual involvement in a classroom setting.

The Early Experience program lends itself to the development of more experienced, knowledgeable, and confident teachers.

The College of Steubenville views teacher preparation in a practical sense and thus along with the aforementioned, initiated the Early Experience program to complement the course of study outlined for the elementary education major. All early involvement and participation is strictly in addition to the regular course requirements.

The Education Department feels that all majors should be given the opportunity to acquire a repertoire of techniques and methods which enhances the learning of students in the elementary classroom.

The program is extensive in that it places all full time elementary education majors, Freshmen thru Seniors, in the schools of the surrounding area.

The personal involvement the elementary education major from the College of Steubenville receives, provides a background in working with children before student teaching, thus eliminating the long period of adjustment from college theory classes to actual classroom situations.

COMPREHENSIVE EXPLANATION

Early Experience is designed to place all full time elementary education majors in school facilities to contact the classroom setting and deal with children directly. It is especially designed for direct involvement with individuals and small group instruction.

The students are classroom participants seven out of the eight semesters attending college as elementary education majors.

Desirability forms are sent to the surrounding school districts, public and parochial. Any teacher desiring an early experience student indicates preference of morning or afternoon time slots. The students are placed in the classrooms for either two mornings or two afternoons per week. Once the preference is indicated and form returned, charts are constructed indicating teachers, grade levels, schools, and classroom structure, thus providing variability for the students in the seven semesters.

Students after final registration, aware of schedule, and aware of morning and afternoon availability, register for early experience with a member of the Education Department at a designated time. At this time students and college faculty members draw up contracts, which are at the conclusion of the semester signed by the classroom teacher and building principal. It is each student's responsibility to carry out contract terms of designated hours that are to be spent in the classroom. The student keeps records of all hours on time sheets provided by the Education Department.

At the conclusion of the semester each early experience person is performance rated on criteria applicable to this type situation i.e., interest, dependability, attitude, etc. The evaluation is prepared and signed by the classroom teacher. The forms, once returned to the Education Department, are then plotted on an Early Experience profile sheet which indicates the areas of criteria

evaluated. At the present, the students are rated above average, average, and below average. The profile sheets are color coded, thus allowing college education faculty members to see at a glance the overall rating. The faculty member after reviewing evaluations sends out notices to all students either commending them on outstanding participation or requesting a conference.

The conference with those students working at the average or below average level is effective so the student is aware of weak and strong areas and may concentrate on these areas in the following semester. At this time faculty member offers suggestions to help with weaker areas and tries to promote a better understanding. The profile sheet indicates all seven semesters and progress or regression can be easily determined. At the conclusion of conferences, the faculty member makes notes of counseling and recommendations. All forms when completed are placed in student's file, which may be used for seeking positions at request of students.

In order to alleviate any classroom problems that may legally occur, all students are required to be covered either by Student Education Association insurance or by parental insurance. It is also a requirement that students have the proper medical tests, such as the TINE test for TB, since they are in direct contact with children.

The program, since its initiation, has been placing all freshman and sophomores with one local school district. The district has a need for early experience people because of class structure and requested the bulk of both classes. The school district for the purposes of transportation has permitted the use of a van for those students participating. The only budget allotment is for that of van repairs, gas, etc. and payment of driver.

The objectives of the program are that the students become more knowledgeable

and comprehensive in their contact with children, methods, techinques, and class structures. Another objective of the program would be to bridge the gap from the theory in class work to the actual teaching situation.

The Education Department feels the contributions from the program have been more than effective in the preparation of future teachers. The information provided for the education faculty is abundant to help the elementary education major prepare to be the best possible teacher in the ever changing world of education.

Name of Program Submitted: Early Experience Program

Institution: College of Steubenville

President: Very Rev. Kevin R. Keelan, T.O.R.

Campus Public Information Officer: Mr. Irwin A. Fluharty

Faculty Member Responsible for Program: Mrs. F. Dianne Keenan

Title of the Faculty Member: Coordinator of Elementary Education Early Experience

Signature: F Dianne Keenan

Title: Coordinator of Elementary Education Early Experience Date: Nov. 21, 1973

ABSTRACT

Bridging the gap between theory and "know-how", the Education Department of the College of Steubenville concluded the drastic need for a program to enrich the students with a more comprehensive background of elementary education. The Early Experience program was thus initiated to work in conjunction with the required course of study for all full time elementary education majors. The program places the Freshman thru Senior students in the classrooms of schools, parochial and public, in the surrounding area giving the student personal contact with methods and techniques, small group instruction, insight to the development of a philosophy of education, classroom structure, and most important direct involvement with children.

The program has been successful in that it helps the student decide for himself the profession he has chosen, and it also helps the Education Department work individually with students to strengthen their skills and provide an extensive background for the future teacher.

It is now possible through the help of the Early Experience program to make the college class work much more meaningful when it may be applied almost immediately.